

memorabilia, like to reminisce about the times gone by. As the elder Ms. Taylor said, if there is a shop like this, it should be in Harlem. I concur. These objects represent a painful period of our history. But they also symbolize the period when we rose up to claim our fundamental rights as human beings. I acknowledge that it is an ugly part of our heritage, but it should not be hidden away. It serves as a reminder of the era of Jim Crow and a warning that we should never forget the negative consequences of racism.

David Pilgrim, who is Black, argues that these "contemptible collectibles" either belong in a museum or in a garbage can, and not in stores. He runs a temporary museum with 5,000 racist objects and is trying to raise funds to establish a permanent Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. The Taylors would like to establish a museum as well, but they too lack the funding.

Mr. Speaker, I bring this effort to preserve this history to the attention of my colleagues and to nongovernmental organization who might be interested in the creation of a museum display the momentos of the Jim Crow era and to serve as a concrete reminder to the Congress of the perils of exclusionary politics.

A GIFT SHOP IN HARLEM FINDS CUSTOMERS  
FOR THE MEMORABILIA OF RACIST AMERICA

(By Anthony Ramirez)

The day Glenda Taylor placed the white hood and white robe of the Ku Klux Klan in the window of her Harlem shop was one to remember.

At the foot of the Klan gown was an 1868 issue of Harper's Weekly depicting a dead black man, with the caption "One Vote Less." Passers-by of all races stopped, stunned, in front of her memorabilia shop, Aunt Meriam's, on West 125th Street, Ms. Taylor said.

One black woman dispatched her 10-year-old daughter into the shop to confront Ms. Taylor, 50, who is black. The girl, Ms. Taylor recalled, said something like, "How could you?"

Ms. Taylor and her mother, Mary Taylor, sell all manner of black memorabilia, including advertisements for the Cotton Club and playbills for a Broadway musical starring Sammy Davis, Jr.

But the Taylors and dealers like them also sell collectibles from the Jim Crow era—cookie jars, coin banks, matchbook covers, fruit-box labels, ashtrays, postcards, sheet music, just to name a few items—that portray blacks in grotesquely racist ways. Little boys eat watermelon. Men steal chickens. Women happily scrub and clean.

While selling such items in the heart of America's most famous black neighborhood might seem offensive, dealers say that blacks rather than whites tend to be the ones collecting the most repellent objects.

"Why do some Jews collect Holocaust material?" asked Wyatt Houston Day of the Swann Galleries in Manhattan, who organizes an annual auction of African-American. "Any people who endure a Holocaust tend to collect, out of a lest-we-forget impulse. It is very much akin to what happened to blacks, and the objects are just as vile."

With the civil rights movement, many whites became ashamed to keep their own racially caricatured bric-a-brac, or that of their parents and grandparents. The rise of the Internet caused prices to fall as attics and cupboards emptied and glutted the market on eBay and Yahoo auction sites. An especially prized type of cookie jar—the McCoy mammy jar—once sold for as much as \$600; it now sells for as little as \$50.

"The main reason that black people collect" objectionable objects, Glenda Taylor said, is "that they love that item and hate that item at the same time."

She added, "It's like the 'n' word. African-Americans are very good at turning a painful thing into something else."

For David Pilgrim, a sociology professor at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Mich., however, the issue is starker. "This is the ugly intersection of money and race," he said.

Mr. Pilgrim, who is black, runs a temporary museum, with 5,000 racist objects. Stores, he argued, are not the proper surroundings for a thoughtful discussion of what he calls "contemptible collectibles."

He is trying to raise money to establish a permanent Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia ([www.ferris.edu/jimcrow](http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow)). "To me," said Mr. Pilgrim, whose own collection makes up nearly half of the temporary museum's inventory, "this stuff is garbage. It belongs either in a museum or a garbage can."

Most historians date the Jim Crow era from 1877, when the federal occupation of the South ended, to 1965, when the Civil Rights Act guaranteeing basic rights for black Americans was passed. Jim Crow was an 1820's musical routine performed by white men in blackface, and the term became a synonym for discrimination and segregation. Jim Crow laws passed by Southern legislatures were a way for whites to roll back black gains after the Civil War.

But Mr. Day of the Swann Galleries said that derogatory objects were made in every state, including New York. "It is very much blacks through white eyes, not a region's eyes," he said.

Mary Taylor, 68, remembers growing up with mammy dolls and other racially stereotyped objects in Hallandale, Fla., near Fort Lauderdale. "We resented this stuff," said Ms. Taylor, a former administrator at Medgar Evers College. "It depicted us as ugly."

She added that blacks now looked at it differently. "We look at ourselves differently. A lot of black people don't have that inferiority complex anymore."

The Taylors scour garage sales, lawn sales, auctions, flea markets and estate sales in upstate New York, Pennsylvania and Florida for items. "The smaller the town, the better," because they tend to have more of the smaller auctions and estate sales, where prices are still low, the elder Ms. Taylor said.

Glenda Taylor, a former administrator for nonprofit education groups, said she got the 1920's Klan robe from "a white collector who got it from an estate sale from someone's attic," she said. The Taylors later sold the hood and robe for \$1,500 to a collector in Washington State.

The younger Ms. Taylor likens her shop, named after a favorite aunt, to a time machine. Older black customers, prompted by the memorabilia, like to reminisce, she said.

A black man in his 60's, looking at a "For Colored Only" reproduction in the shop, remembered the time when as a college student he had lunch in a Louisiana coffee shop. As he left, the white owner broke every dish he had used.

The next day, the black man, a drum major at nearby Grambling State University, brought the entire football team—all blacks—for lunch. They watched in satisfaction as the shaken white owner broke dozens of his dishes.

"If any type of shop like this should be, it should be here in Harlem," the elder Ms. Taylor said. "There should be a black museum. I would prefer that, if we had the money."

RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSIT  
SECURITY

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 12, 2006

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, strengthening and enhancing the safety and security of our Nation's public transportation network is an urgent and critical need. Worldwide public transportation systems have been shown to be vulnerable targets for terrorist attacks, as exhibited by yesterday's horrific train bombing in India, which claimed at least 200 lives and injured at least 700 more.

I believe passenger rail and public transportation providers face a difficult challenge: To provide affordable, efficient, and safe transportation services in an open and readily accessible environment.

Our Nation's public transportation systems provide more than 9.5 billion transit trips annually on all modes of transit service. In addition, Amtrak provides service to more than 25 million passengers annually on 21,000 miles of routes. The extensiveness of these systems and the sheer volume of passengers who rely on public transportation make these systems an attractive target for terrorists.

Yet since September 11, 2001, the Nation has focused its attention primarily on aviation security. As a result, we have made a great deal of progress in aviation, but much still needs to be done for other modes of transportation. I am aware of the many initiatives taken by public transportation providers and Amtrak to enhance the safety and security of their passengers. I am also well aware of the security initiatives that the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the Transportation Security Administration, TSA, have embarked upon, but those efforts are not enough. This year, the United States will spend \$4.7 billion on aviation security. In contrast, the TSA has spent only \$387.5 million in grants on public transportation security over the last four years, even though five times as many people take trains as planes every day.

This House just passed legislation that will provide \$200 million for rail and transit security. Thanks to the efforts of the Gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and other Members, that's more than we have done in the past, but more funding is needed to ensure our Nation's passenger rail and public transportation systems are safe and secure.

Amtrak alone has requested more than \$100 million in security upgrades and nearly \$600 million for fire and life-safety improvements to tunnels on the Northeast Corridor in New York, Maryland, and Washington, DC. The American Public Transit Association, which represents transit agencies and commuter railroads, has identified an estimated \$6 billion in security needs to fully modernize and maintain the security of public transit systems. The lack of funding for safety and security measures endangers the Nation's critical public transportation infrastructure.

The incapacity or destruction of the Nation's transportation systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on our security, national economic stability, national public health, and safety. Our transportation stakeholders, State and local governments and private providers

of public transportation, and the traveling public are depending on us to help provide significant safety and security improvements for public transportation.

I therefore urge the House's immediate consideration of H.R. 2351, which will protect the safety and security of our Nation's rail and transit systems and the passengers, workers, and communities that are served by them.

COMMENDING THE ISRAEL AIR  
FORCE CENTER FOUNDATION

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 12, 2006*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to call the attention of my colleagues in the Congress to the Israel Air Force Center Foundation—a private non-profit charitable organization which has done a great deal to strengthen ties between the American people and the people of Israel and between the military organizations of the United States and Israel and to enhance the peaceful commercial uses of air and space technology.

I do this today, Mr. Speaker, because a group of the American leaders of the Israel Air Force Center Foundation will be visiting Washington next week. During their visit they will meet with leading Members of the Congress as well as other public and private leaders here in our nation's capital in an effort to strengthen the work of the Foundation and introduce American leaders to their work.

Mr. Speaker, the Israel Air Force Center is a unique Israeli institution—part think-tank (along the lines of the Rand Corporation in the United States) and part media, history, and resource center which focuses on Israel's emergence as a world leader in science and technology. The Center is located in Herzliya, Israel, and housed in a stunning building which opened in the summer of 2003.

The Israel Air Force Center was established by the Israel Air Force Association, a private organization which provides non-official sup-

port for Israel's fabled Air Force. The Association is similar to organizations in the United States which provide support for our own military organization such as the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), and like its American counterparts, it was founded by former Israeli Air Force officers.

The Israel Air Force Center was established to emphasize the link between the Israeli Air Force, its veterans, the people of Israel, and an international community committed to improving quality of life through science and the peaceful application of aerospace technology. Sponsors have established major research chairs at the Center, including one in aviation security, to aid policy makers in key decisions and to strengthen the economy and security of Israel and advance human knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, the Israel Air Force Center Foundation is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization in the United States which has as its objective providing financial support for the Israel Air Force Center and the activities of the Israel Air Force Association. I commend these patriotic Americans who participate in the Foundation's activities. Their efforts to strengthen the ties between the United States and Israel are important for both countries, and the support they give to the research and development activities of the Israel Air Force Center are beneficial to both the United States and to Israel.

As my colleagues know, American support for Israel is more critical than ever in today's unstable world. As the only stable democracy in the Middle East, it is our responsibility to help protect Israel from the multiplicity of dangers on its borders and its region, including threats from Iran and Syria. The Israeli military forces, including the Israel Air Force, are a vital deterrent to those threats. The partnership between the U.S. Air Force and the IAF sets an excellent example for military cooperation. Israeli-developed systems boost the American Air Force's targeting and navigation ability in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Israeli-developed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are a vital component of U.S. military efforts on both those fronts. Virtually every senior IAF officer has trained in the United States, and

most IAF equipment is U.S.-origin, including the F-15 and F-16 fighter jets, which form the backbone of the IAF's strike force.

In addition, the Israel Air Force Center provides fundamental information to the international community on current air force research. The Center's think-tank, the Fisher Brothers Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies, fosters the growth of ideas and public debate by holding seminars and international conferences. The Aviation Safety and Security Center at the Institute is dedicated to enhancing and disseminating IAF expertise on aviation safety and security throughout the world.

In addition to its strategic function, specific programs of the Israel Air Force Center undertake numerous charitable activities. The Adelson Institute for Academic Studies reintegrates Air Force servicemen and women into civilian life through training courses, personal guidance and links to the private business sector. The Family Service Center assists Air Force families cope with trauma and bereavement. The Center provides tremendous support and an emotional outlet to those whose loved ones have been killed or injured in the line of duty. The Center also seeks to help the larger Israeli citizenry by adopting developing towns and supporting educational programs in underprivileged communities. The Association funds day-care centers, kindergartens and schools in need in addition sending members to tutor school children.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to witness the work of the Israel Air Force Center firsthand during a recent visit to Israel. That reinforced how critically important it is for the U.S. Air Force and the Israel Air Force to continue working together during this crucial time of instability and tension within the Middle East. At the same time, I was able to see the vital importance of the Center in contributing to the U.S.-Israel cooperative relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in commending the Israel Air Force Center Foundation for their significant contribution to U.S.-Israel relations, and I wish the Foundation increasing success in its important work.